

R E M A R K S

This is in response to the Office Action that was mailed on October 4, 2004. Claim 1 is amended to correct a minor formal error. Claims 2 and 3 are amended to depend from claim 1. No new matter has been introduced. Claims 1-3 remain in the application.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected on the ground of (obviousness-type?) double patenting over claims 1 and 6 of US 6,716,494 B2. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rationale for this rejection. This rejection is vigorously traversed.

Noting that the Examiner has not rejected claim 1 herein on the ground of double patenting, Applicants have amended claims 2 and 3 to depend from claim 1. Thus none of the claims remaining in this application is directed to the subject matter that the Examiner (erroneously) indicated is allegedly involved in double patenting.

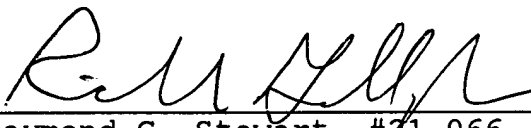
On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner requested copies of the foreign patent documents that were cited in the IDS filed herein on October 20, 2003. A copy of each of those documents will be submitted shortly.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Richard Gallagher (Reg. No. 28,781) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By  #28,781
Raymond C. Stewart, #21,066

RCS/RG/jmb
2224-0223P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000